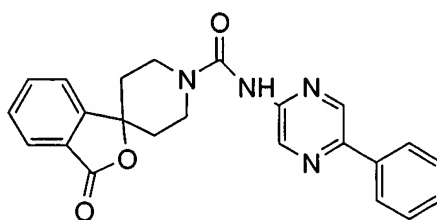


Please amend the application as follows:

Amendments to the Claims

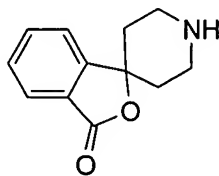
This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of Claims in the application:

1. (amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula I:

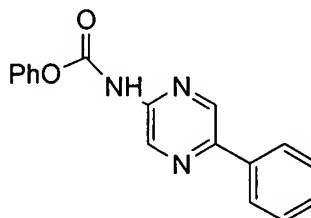


I

comprising coupling a compound of formula II with a compound of formula III in the presence of an organic base selected from the group consisting of NBu_3 , Me_2NBu and Me_2NBn in a solvent system selected from the group consisting of MeCN, MeCN/water and DMF/water.



II



III

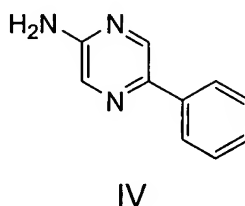
2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (amended) The process of Claim 1 further comprising the step of combining 2-amino-5-phenylpyrazine (IV) and phenyl chloroformate in ~~an organic solvent system~~ MeCN to yield the compound of formula III.

5. (canceled)

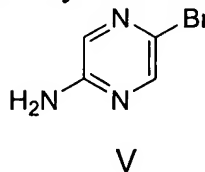
6. (amended) ~~The A~~ process for preparing a compound of formula III ~~of Claim 4~~ further comprising the step of combining 2-amino-5-bromopyrazine (V) and phenyl boronic acid in an organic solvent system in the presence of a catalyst to yield the compound of formula IV.



7. (original) The process of Claim 6 wherein the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of $\text{PdCl}_2 \cdot \text{dppf} \cdot \text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$, $\text{Pd}(\text{PPh}_3)_4$, $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})/\text{PPh}_3$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[(\text{Pet}_3)_2]$, $\text{Pd}(\text{DIPHOS})_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}(\text{Bipy})$, $[\text{PdCl}(\text{Ph}_2\text{PCH}_2\text{PPh}_2)]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(\text{o-tol})_3]_2$, $\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3/\text{P}(\text{o-tol})_3$, $\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})/\text{P}(\text{furyl})_3$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(\text{furyl})_3]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}(\text{PMePh}_2)_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(4\text{-F-Ph})_3]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(\text{C}_6\text{F}_5)_3]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(2\text{-COOH-Ph})(\text{Ph})_2]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(4\text{-COOH-Ph})(\text{Ph})_2]_2$.

8. (original) The process of Claim 7 wherein the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of $\text{PdCl}_2 \cdot \text{dppf} \cdot \text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$, $\text{Pd}(\text{PPh}_3)_4$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(4\text{-F-Ph})_3]_2$, $\text{Cl}_2\text{Pd}[\text{P}(4\text{-COOH-Ph})(\text{Ph})_2]_2$.

9. (original) The process of Claim 6 further comprising the step of combining 2-aminopyrazine and a bromination agent to yield the compound of formula V.



10. (original) The process of Claim 9 wherein the bromination agent is selected from the group consisting of Br_2 , NBS, Bu_4NBr_3 , N-bromo acetamide and 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin.

11. (original) The process of Claim 10 wherein the bromination agent is selected from the group consisting of NBS and 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin.